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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Subject: "TURKEY-RAISING EXPERIENCES". Information from the Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Naturally this time of year more folks than usual are turkey-conscious. That goes for folks who raise turkeys as well as for those who enjoy the table version of them. And since most of us like to eat them, it may be interesting today to hear about a few of the people who raise them - either as a side-line or full-time job. The women I'm going to mention happen to be wives of farmers cooperating in the FSA program, because all these stories are from files of the Farm Security Administration.

First there's Mrs. Walter Ludwick of Greenwood County, Kansas. Mrs. Ludwick handles her birds like a cattleman handles herds on the range. She brands them like cattle. She says when she first bought a branding iron for $5 several years ago, her husband said she was wasting money. But soon afterward, several of her best birds strayed away and she was able to identify them easily in a neighboring flock. After that, there were numerous occasions when she was glad she had the iron.

One of her main problems has been to keep away coyotes which are bad in her locality. One year she solved the problem by lighting large, slow-burning fire-crackers around the edges of the turkey quarters. The powder smoke, she said, kept the animal thieves away.

In "the Shepherd of the Hills" country of Taney County, Missouri, Mrs. Carl Wallace had a different problem. She didn't have water for her turkeys, and had to buy it. She and her husband, a recently discharged war veteran, located an old 500-gallon tank, hauled it to their farm, and patched it up so it wouldn't leak. Then they had it filled by a local water hauler. Their turkeys used about 60 gallons a day, and water hauling cost half a cent per gallon but, in spite of that expense, they say they made a good profit.

Speaking of turkey problems, Mrs. John Comstock of Boulder County, Colorado,

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had a slightly different one - not as serious but a nuisance. Her flock refused to be herded by anyone in the family but her, which often caused considerable inconvenience. The reason was that when they were young, they got used to her voice and refused to pay attention to anyone else. Finally the resourceful woman hit upon the idea of using an old cow bell at feeding time. The turkeys gradually learned to connect the cow bell with food, and soon anyone with the bell could herd them.

Mrs. F. R. Johnson of Kingman County, Kansas is pretty proud of her family's beef-type turkeys. She has raised as many as 500 a year, and sells them when the hens weigh around 19 pounds and the toms about 29 pounds. These larger type birds find a ready market at local hotels. Mr. Johnson says while his wife raises turkeys, he keeps busy raising homegrown feed for them to keep down expenses and increase profits.

Mrs. Frank Pettit of McHenry County, North Dakota likes to remember how she and her husband traded an old wagon for six turkeys a few years ago. From this small beginning, she worked up to a flock of 80 birds, all high grade stock. In fact, she won a number of prizes at county and state fairs, and even one grand championship in her county. Of course that led to top prices for her birds and premium prices for their eggs. Needless to say, the Pettit's soon earned enough to buy a new wagon to replace the one they swapped earlier for a start in turkeys.

Well, next time you bite into some nice tender white or dark meat, you might wonder where that turkey came from. It's barely possible it was branded on the Ludwick farm in Kansas, drank "bought water" in the Shepherd of the Hills country of Missouri, was herded somewhere with a cow bell, or had some other "past" you've heard about today.

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